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los angeles city planning



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Los Angeles is the hub
of the second largest metropolitan
area in the country and the

what

capital of finance and international trade

in the Western United States.

With almost 3.5 million residents, Los Angeles includes in one setting the most diverse mix of peoples, languages, and cultures virtually anywhere.

A city in transition, Los Angeles stands at a crossroads.

By the year 2010, less than 20 years from now, the number of Los Angeles residents could reach 4.3 million, in the middle of a regional population of over 20 million.

Higher Densities

Unlike the past, when Los Angeles was able to accommodate a growing population through annexation of undeveloped land, future growth in the city will be accommodated largely by building on smaller scattered parcels, a process called "infill development." The city's present geographic size is not expected to increase. Instead, more of us will likely be living in apartment or condominium complexes.

Where Are All of These People Coming From?

The largest source of future growth in Southern California, estimated at 63%, is expected to result from natural increase, the excess of births over deaths. The remaining 37% of future growth in the Los Angeles area is expected to result from foreign immigration. Domestic in-migration will no longer remain a strong force. In fact, demographers estimate that more residents will leave the area than will move here from other parts of the country.

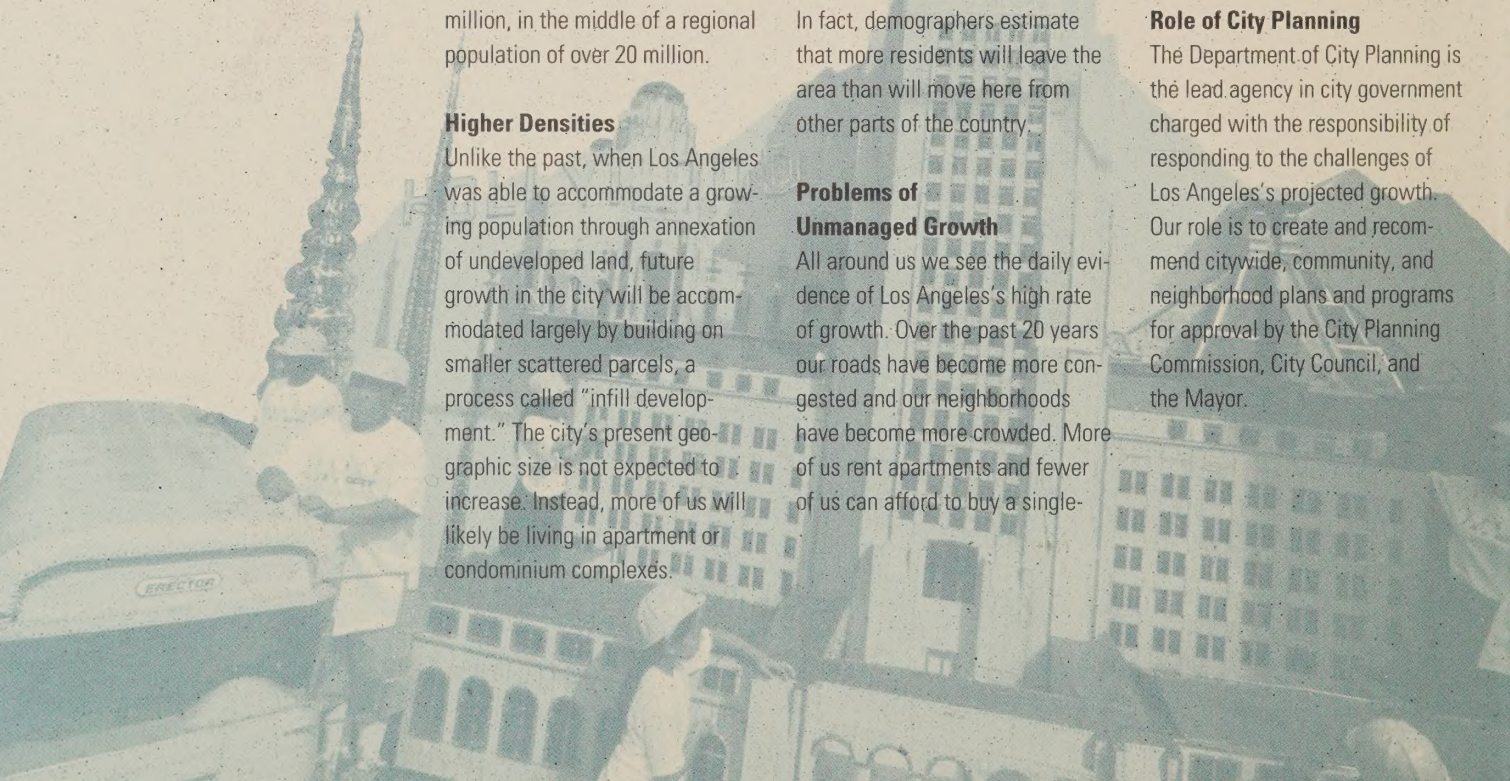
Problems of Unmanaged Growth

All around us we see the daily evidence of Los Angeles's high rate of growth. Over the past 20 years our roads have become more congested and our neighborhoods have become more crowded. More of us rent apartments and fewer of us can afford to buy a single-

family house. During the 1980s the economy failed to provide adequate opportunities for mid-level employment, widening the income disparity between city residents in high-skill, high-paying careers and those in low-skill, low-paying jobs. The historic long-term rise in property values has contributed to the present-day shortage of affordable housing.

Role of City Planning

The Department of City Planning is the lead agency in city government charged with the responsibility of responding to the challenges of Los Angeles's projected growth. Our role is to create and recommend citywide, community, and neighborhood plans and programs for approval by the City Planning Commission, City Council, and the Mayor.



What are some of the challenges

facing the city and the planning department

in the coming years?

is the city

Working Together

We do our job by working with other city departments, outside governmental agencies, community groups, and the general public. One of our most important responsibilities is to prepare the city's General Plan. By state law, the General Plan is a "constitution" or blueprint for guiding a community's future growth. All development in the city, both public and private, must conform to the policies contained in this document.

Some other key responsibilities of the Planning Department include the drafting of zoning ordinances,

evaluation of environmental impact reports, and review of subdivision and parcel maps submitted by private developers for approval by the city.

first be approved by the Planning Commission and then by the City Council and the Mayor. The Mayor also appoints the five members of the Board of Zoning Appeals, who

The Mayor appoints the five members of the City Planning Commission, who provide policy direction to the Planning Department. Plans and ordinances must

hear appeals of determinations made by Zoning Administrators. The Director of Planning oversees the day-to-day operations of the Planning Department.

- To help maintain a strong economic base that provides good jobs at good wages for city residents.
- To help clean the air and protect the natural environment.

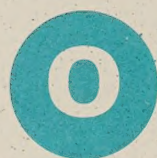
- To reduce traffic congestion and encourage the use of public transit.
- To stimulate the production of housing that is affordable to all income groups in the city.
- To help ensure that parks, utilities, solid waste disposal, wastewater treatment, and other public services and infrastructure systems are adequate to meet the demands posed by a growing population.

planning

department

- To create more pedestrian-friendly streets and other public spaces where people can walk instead of drive to their destinations.
- To protect and enhance the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods and communities.

?



n September 4, 1781, the Spanish governor

Felipe de Neve founded el Pueblo de Nuestra

Señora la Reina de Los Angeles (the City of Our Lady

Queen of the Angels) along the Porciuncula

a history of

(later Los
Angeles) River

A plan was laid out like a subdivision map identifying sites for a public plaza, church, homes, and farms as well as an irrigation system and a road connecting the pueblo to the Mission at San Gabriel. Eleven families constituted the first settlers.

Sixty-eight years later in 1849, when United States Army Engineer Lieutenant E.O.C. Ord completed the city's first official survey and mapping under American rule, Los Angeles was a western frontier town of less than 2,000 inhabitants. Little additional growth would take place until 1892 when William Doheny discovered oil at what is now the intersection of Second Street and Glendale Boulevard. By 1900 Los Angeles was the oil center of the west with a population of over 100,000 residents.

City officials were soon making plans to import water to enable further growth to occur. William Mulholland, the City Engineer and Superintendent of the Water Department, designed an ambitious system for transporting water from the Owens Valley

Engineer, developed a hydroelectric system to harness the energy generated by the rapidly flowing waters of the Owens River aqueduct. Scattergood's first power plant, the San Francisquito Power Plant No. 1, became operational in 1917.

planning

located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. A 250 mile long aqueduct was completed in 1913. Two years later in 1915 the San Fernando Valley was annexed, nearly doubling the size of the city.

In the meantime E.F. Scattergood, the city's first Chief Electrical

Thus supplied with reliable sources of water and power, Los Angeles continued to grow. By 1920 a major metropolitan center was very much in evidence. Close to 600,000 people lived in a city of 364 square miles.

First Plans and Ordinances

Contrary to popular thinking, Los Angeles is not an unplanned city. Los Angeles has a long history of planning for its future. In 1908 the city adopted an ordinance which established the nation's first land use designations. In 1910 the City Council established a 15-member Planning Committee to develop a "comprehensive plan whereby Los Angeles may develop her material improvement along artistic as well as practical lines."

In 1920 the Planning Committee was replaced by a 52-member City Planning Commission comprised of representatives of the largest civic groups in Los Angeles. Gordon Whitnall was appointed the Commission's first secretary and also served as its first professional planner. Under Whitnall's guidance the Commission completed the city's first comprehensive Street Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

In 1925 a major revision to the City Charter reduced the size of the Planning Commission to five members and created a professional planning department. Whitnall was appointed to head the new department. Before he resigned in 1930, Whitnall revised the zoning ordinance. Height, area, density and parking regulations were prepared and standard zone categories were developed. The 1930 ordinance did not undergo any major changes until 1946 when, with Whitnall as a consultant, the entire city was remapped.



*City Hall
groundbreaking*



*Los Angeles
aqueduct*



*Downtown
trolley cars*



Gridlock, 1920s style

Of all the plans and ordinances adopted by Los Angeles, the 1946 ordinance has been the most influential in shaping the city's present configuration of land uses and density patterns.

The Centers Concept

In 1974 the Centers Concept was adopted by the City Council as the framework for future growth and development in Los Angeles. The Centers Concept envisioned the city as a network of urban centers connected by a rail transit system. Centers would be self-contained communities where many types of services, jobs, and housing would be available and accessible. To avoid encroachment of unwanted commercial developments or higher densities, the Centers Concept called for concentrating growth in these urban centers while preserving the city's predominant single-family pattern of residential development.

Current General Plan

During the 1970s and the 1980s the Centers Concept guided the department's preparation of the current General Plan, which consists of 35 community plans and a variety of citywide elements. The community plans collectively comprise the land use element. The topics addressed by the citywide elements include air quality, cultural resources, drainage, the environment, housing, noise, open space and conservation, public services, major public facilities, safety, solid waste disposal, transportation, utilities, and wastewater treatment.

General Plan Update

The City Planning Department is now updating the current General Plan to reflect the profound changes that have occurred in Los Angeles over the past 20 years and to prepare the city for the 21st Century.

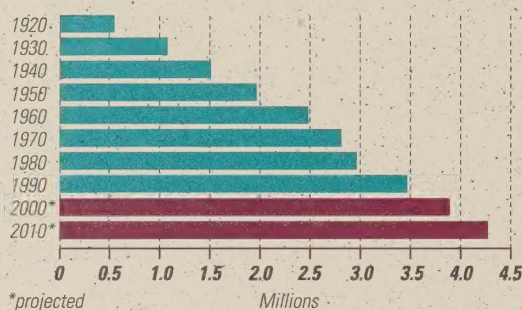
in los angeles



The City of Los Angeles occupies
approximately **10% of the land**
in Los Angeles County,
but accounts for 39% of its population.

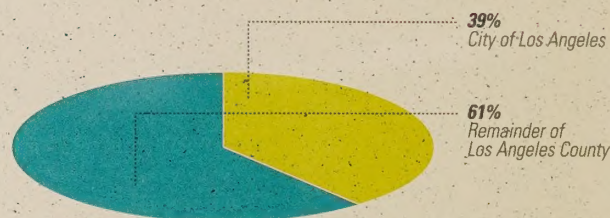
Population Growth

City of Los Angeles—1920-2010



Total Population

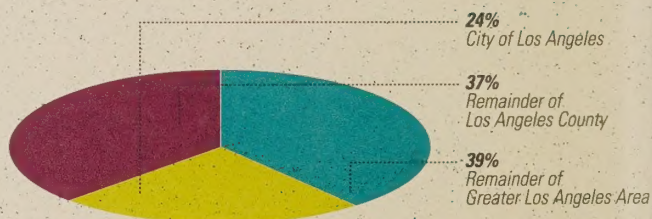
County of Los Angeles—1990



After New York, Los Angeles has the largest population of any city in the country. As of 1990, the five-county greater Los Angeles area, which includes Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Ventura counties, had a population of 14,528,000. The city of Los Angeles's share of this population was 24%, or 3,485,000 people.

Total Population

Greater Los Angeles Area—1990



During the 1980s the city added 519,000 residents. By the year 2010 the Southern California Association of Governments predicts that the city will add 822,000 more residents, for a total population of 4,307,000.

Los Angeles is a city of great racial and ethnic diversity. It is home to the largest Mexican, Filipino, and Korean populations outside their native countries. The 1970 U.S. Census was the last census that counted a single ethnic majority in Los Angeles. At that time non-Hispanic whites accounted for 60% of the

population. While not the majority, Hispanics are now the single largest ethnic group in the city, accounting for 40% of all residents as of the 1990 U.S. Census. The proportion of non-Hispanic whites has declined significantly to only 37% of the city's population.



In 1990, nearly 40% of Los Angeles's population was born outside of the United States

How Big is L.A.?

At 467 square miles Los Angeles is the fifth largest city in terms of land area in the United States. The combined land areas of some of the country's most populous cities including San Francisco and Boston could be fit within its boundaries. The topographical variety of Los Angeles is tremendous, from beaches and mountainous national forests to valleys and wetlands.



Race and Ethnicity

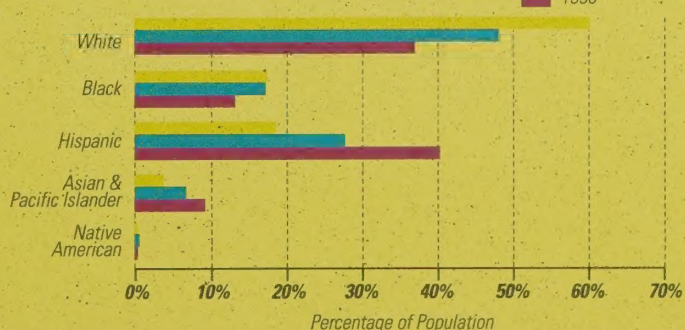
City of Los Angeles—1990

37%
White
13%
Black
40%
Hispanic
9%
Asian & Pacific Islander
less than 1%
Native American

Changes by Race and Ethnicity

City of Los Angeles—1970-1990

1970
1980
1990





Only 14 countries in the world have a gross domestic product larger than Los Angeles County's.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach together handle the greatest volume of trade in the country. Los Angeles International is the nation's third busiest airport with over 47 million passengers per year.

Los Angeles is the largest employment center in Southern California. With a 1990 economic base of 1.9 million jobs, Los Angeles attracts commuters from all over the region.

The greater Los Angeles area is the largest and most diverse center for manufacturing in the United States. "High-tech" industries such as aerospace, although shrinking, account for the largest share of our manufacturing jobs. The apparel industry is the second largest source of manufacturing jobs after "high-tech" and aerospace.

The tourism and entertainment industries are two of the most important employment sectors in the regional economy. Since 1972 these sectors have expanded by 130%, the second highest employment growth rate after professional and service jobs, which expanded by 140% during this same time period. In 1992, for the first time, the tourism and entertainment sectors provided more jobs than defense-related industries.

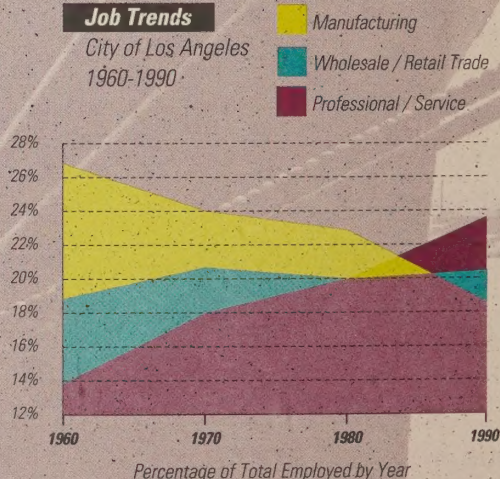
The typical employer in the greater Los Angeles area is small. Three out of four employers have nine or fewer employees; 19 out of 20 have fewer than 50 employees; and 97 out of 100 have fewer than 100 employees.

During the 1970s the percentage of employed residents increased from 41% of the city's population at the beginning of the decade to 48% at its close, reflecting the

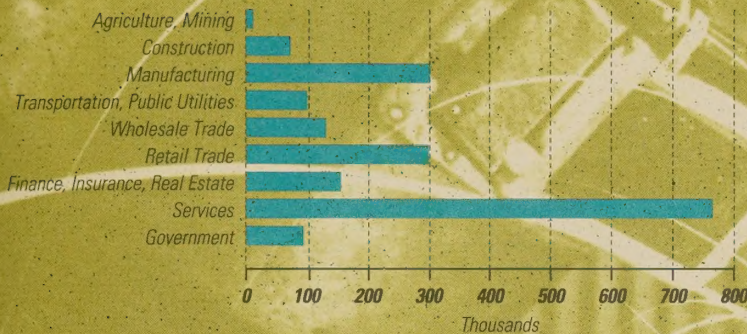
From 1960 to 1990 the city's employment mix changed dramatically. The number of city residents employed in manufacturing jobs declined by 31% while the number employed in professional and service jobs increased by 71%.

Job Trends

City of Los Angeles
1960-1990



Employment by Industry City of Los Angeles - 1990

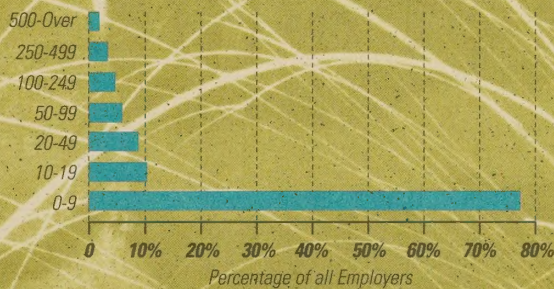


Future jobs may come from emerging "high-tech" industries. For example, the construction of the regional rail transit system and the local development of an electric car may provide the foundation for an advanced ground transportation systems industry in the greater Los Angeles area; exporting vehicles, engines, and parts all over the globe.

greater participation of women in the job market. Since then the percentage of employed residents has remained the same.

Over the next few years current trends suggest a gradual continued decline in industrial jobs, particularly those related to national defense. These same trends, however, suggest some continued job growth in "low-tech" sectors of the economy, such as the apparel industry.

Greater Los Angeles Area Employers - 1990 by size of firm



Population and Employed Residents City of Los Angeles - 1960-1990

In 1990, 48% or 1.7 million of the city's residents were employed. The city's 1990 unemployment rate was 8.4%. 1990 average household income was \$45,790.





land use & housing

Land Use

Residential development is the largest single use of land in the city, accounting for 38% of all acreage in Los Angeles. At 21%, streets and other infrastructure is the second largest use of land in the city. This latter percentage is higher than the total amount of land designated for commercial and industrial uses and is almost as high as all of the land designated as open space (23%). Open space includes parks as well as undeveloped public and private properties.

Los Angeles has twice as much land in industrial use (9%) than in commercial use (4%).

Present industrial development in the city includes approximately 305 million square feet of space. This figure represents only 19% of the amount of industrial development theoretically permitted by the General Plan. As a practical matter, given the low-density nature of most industrial development, it's unlikely that these properties will be built out to the level permitted by the General Plan.

Present commercial development in the city includes approximately 340 million square feet of retail and office space. Build out of the current General Plan would result in almost three times that amount of development, or over one billion square feet of retail and office space.



Housing

Most city residents no longer live in single-family houses. Instead, 60% of the households in Los Angeles now live in multiple family housing, either renting or owning, but on only 19% of the total acreage set aside for residential land use. Fifty-seven percent of all dwelling units are renter occupied, 37% are owner occupied, and 6% are vacant.



Existing Land Use

Percent of Total Land Area
City of Los Angeles—1990

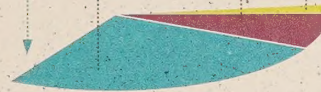
23%
Open Space
5%
Other
4%
Commercial
9%
Industrial
21%
Streets / Infrastructure
38%
Residential



Residential Land Use

Percent of Total Residential Land Area

76%
Single Family
19%
Multiple Family
5%
Agricultural / Rural / Estates



Population growth has outstripped the city's ability to build new housing. Between 1980 and 1990, the population grew by over 17%, while the number of housing units increased by only 9%. As a result, the average number of persons per household increased from 2.55 to 2.83, and the percentage of overcrowded units increased markedly from 13% to 22%. During this

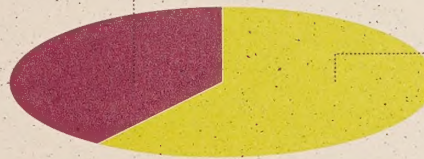
time the cost of housing outpaced income growth. The percentage

of households that pay more than a third of their income for housing increased from 29% to 35%.

People over the age of 45 are the most likely to be homeowners. The percentage of mature households that owned their own homes rose 11% during the 1980s while the percentage of younger households that owned their own homes declined 8% during this same time period.

Dwelling Units by Type

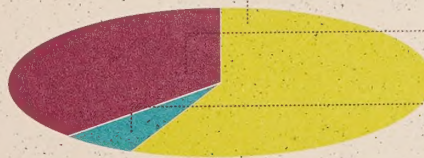
Percent of Total Dwelling Units
City of Los Angeles—1990



60%
Multiple Family
780,000 Dwelling Units
40%
Single Family
520,000 Dwelling Units

Home Ownership

Percent of Total Dwelling Units
City of Los Angeles—1990



57%
Renter Occupied
738,000 Dwelling Units
37%
Owner Occupied
480,000 Dwelling Units
6%
Vacant
82,000 Dwelling Units

single use



A

ngelenos take more than **15 million**

trips a day but only 5%

of these trips are made by transit.



transportation

The transportation system in Los Angeles is enormous, encompassing 165 miles of freeways and 4,000 signalized intersections. Forty-one percent of these traffic signals are computerized. Full computerization of all traffic signals is scheduled for completion by 1998.

The average Southern California work trip is 11 miles and takes 22 minutes to complete. More than one million workers from surrounding cities commute to their jobs in Los Angeles every day.

Buses

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) operates the largest bus fleet in the country. Approximately 1,800 MTA buses operate on the city's streets every day. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles operates about 100 local DASH buses and 103 Commuter Express buses.

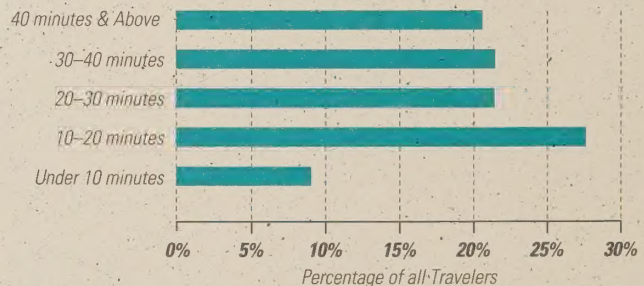
Rail Transit

The Metrolink rail system, inaugurated in 1992, provides long-distance commuter service for workers travelling to downtown Los Angeles from their homes in surrounding cities and counties.

The Blue Line light rail system, linking Long Beach to downtown Los Angeles, opened in 1990. The Red Line subway from Union Station downtown to MacArthur Park opened in 1993.

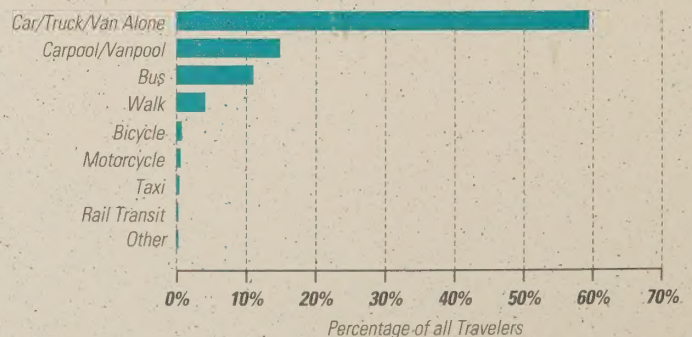
Home to Work Travel Times (One Way)

City of Los Angeles-1990



How People Get to Work

City of Los Angeles-1990



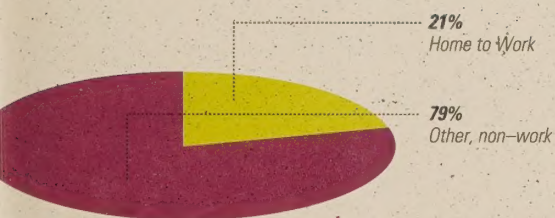


L.A. Metro



Type of Trips

City of Los Angeles—1990



Long Range Plan

The Los Angeles County Long Range Transportation Plan calls for investing billions of dollars in highway, rail, and bus improvements well into the 21st Century. Full implementation of this long range plan will result in a comprehensive Metro Rail system for Los Angeles County.

Metro Rail Opening Dates

- The Red Line extension from downtown to the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue will open by 1996. The Red Line extension to the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street will open by 1998, to East Los Angeles and the Mid-City area by 2000, and to North Hollywood by 2001.
- Union Station downtown to Pasadena will open by 1997.
- The Green Line will extend from El Segundo to Norwalk and will open by 1995.
- Opening dates for other Metro Rail extensions have not been scheduled and are dependent on funding.





To get involved in the Los Angeles city planning process

you need both **information**
and **opportunities** to have your voice heard.

how to get information

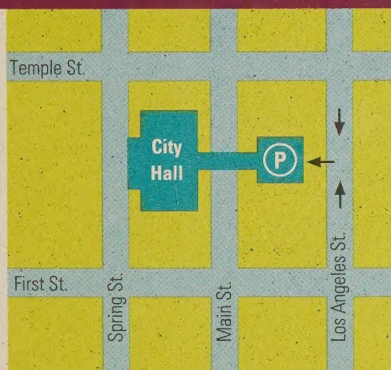
- **Plans:** If you need copies of adopted Community or Specific Plans, contact Maps and Publications at:
City Hall, Room 651 (213) 485-5043
- **Adopted Ordinances:** If you need copies of adopted ordinances related to zoning and planning issues, contact the City Clerk's Office at:
City Clerk's Office, City Hall, Room 395 (213) 485-5705
- **Code Amendments:** If you need information about proposed zoning and planning code amendments, contact the Code Studies Section at:
City Hall, Room 605 (213) 237-0116
- **Project Clearances and Discretionary Cases:** If you need to obtain a clearance from the City Planning Department for your project or if you need to submit an application for discretionary review, contact the City Planning Department's Public Counter at either:
City Hall, Room 460-S or 6251 Van Nuys Blvd. (213) 485-7826 (818) 989-8596
- **Zoning Information:** If you have questions about the City of Los Angeles's Zoning Code or if you need to know the zoning of a specific parcel of land, contact the Department of Building and Safety's Zoning Counter at:
City Hall, Room 460-T (213) 485-2327
- **Subdivisions:** If you need information about divisions of land known as Subdivisions (five or more parcels), including Condominiums, contact the Subdivisions Section at:
City Hall, Room 655 (213) 485-6171
- **Parcel Maps:** If you need information about divisions of land known as Parcel Maps (four or fewer parcels) contact the Subdivisions Section at:
City Hall, Room 655 (213) 485-3861
- **Environmental Review:** If you need information about the environmental review of previous and current projects, contact the Environmental Review Section at:
City Hall, Room 655 (213) 485-3443
- **Neighborhood and Community Planning:** If you need information about Community or Specific Plans, Design Review Boards, or Interim Control Ordinances, contact the Neighborhood and Community Planning Division at:
221 S. Figueroa St., Third Floor or 6255 Van Nuys Blvd., Second Floor (213) 485-6354 (818) 989-8044
- **General Plan:** If you need information about the General Plan, contact the Citywide Planning Division at:
221 S. Figueroa St. Fourth Floor (213) 237-0124
- **Demographics:** If you need information about demographics, including population and housing, contact the Research Section at:
City Hall, Room 605 (213) 485-5052



- **City Council Meetings:** If you need information about meetings of the City Council, including schedules, agendas, or public testimony, contact the City Clerk's Office at:
To listen to City Council meetings call (213) 621-CITY.
To watch City Council meetings tune in to cable channel 35 (Cityview).
City Hall, Room 395 (213) 485-5706
- **Planning and Land Use Management Committee Meetings:** If you need information about meetings of the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee, including schedules, agendas, or public testimony, contact the City Clerk's Office at:
City Hall, Room 395 (213) 485-5707
- **City Planning Commission Meetings:** If you need information about meetings of the City Planning Commission, including schedules, agendas, or public testimony, contact the City Planning Commission's Office at:
City Hall, Room 550 (213) 485-5071
- **City Planning Commission Cases:** If you need information about cases (e.g., zone changes) currently being considered by the City Planning Commission, contact the City Planning Commission's Office at:
City Hall, Room 500 (213) 485-5047
- **Zoning Administrator Cases:** If you need information about cases (e.g. conditional use permits or variances) currently being considered by a Zoning Administrator, contact the Office of Zoning Administration at:
City Hall, Room 600 (213) 485-3851
- **Board of Zoning Appeals Meetings:** If you wish to appeal a determination made by a Zoning Administrator, contact the Board of Zoning Appeals at:
City Hall, Room 516 (213) 485-2470
- **Archives:** If you need to review or make copies of cases already considered by the City Planning Commission or a Zoning Administrator, contact the Automated Records and Files Unit at:
City Hall, Room 500 (213) 485-5047

your voice heard

how to get



Los Angeles Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring Street
Room 561
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Con Howe, Director of Planning

Mayor

Richard J. Riordan

City Council

District #1: Mike Hernandez
District #2: Joel Wachs
District #3: Laura Chick
District #4: John Ferraro, President
District #5: Zev Yaroslavsky
District #6: Ruth Galanter
District #7: Richard Alarcon
District #8: Mark Ridley-Thomas
District #9: Rita Walters
District #10: Nate Holden
District #11: Marvin Braude
District #12: Hal Berman
District #13: Jackie Goldberg
District #14: Richard Alatorre
District #15: Rudy Svorinich, Jr.

City Planning Commission

Mama Schnabel, President
Les Hamaski, Vice-President
Robert S. Scott
Shelly S. Suzuki
Anthony N.R. Zamora

Board of Zoning Appeals

Peter M. Weil, Chair
Joyce M. Perkins, Vice-Chair
James E. Acevedo
Chris Kezios
James E. Silcott

Information in this brochure was collected from the following sources:

U.S. Census Bureau
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Research and Analysis Section
Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Transportation Studies Division

Photo credits: Front Cover courtesy of the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles. Inside Front Cover courtesy of Gary Leonard, Downtown News

Prepared by Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Citywide Division
Funded by Southern California Association of Governments
Design: Moore Jacobano Goltsman, Inc.
February, 1994

This historical map, dated August 29, 1849, known as the Ord Survey, plotted the city into lots and blocks. It expanded the city's original town plan, prepared by Felipe de Neve, the Spanish governor who founded Los Angeles in 1781. The survey was made by United States Army Engineer Lieutenant E.O.C. Ord. He was paid \$3,000 in coin in lieu of his offer of \$1,500 in coin and 10 lots of his choice. Lacking funds, the city borrowed the money from John Temple at an interest rate of 1% per month, and the alcalde or president

The City of Los Angeles



City Map No. 1, 1849

of the Town Council remarked at the time of payment that any one of the lots might, at some time in the future, be worth more than the total fee. The starting point of the survey was the Plaza Church and Lieutenant Ord used military symbols to designate orchards, vineyards, and other terrain features. Figueroa Street was known as "Street of the Grasshoppers," Main Street as "Calle Principal," and the street leading to the cemetery (North Broadway) as "Eternity Street."